

II. REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in the light of the amendments and the following discussion is respectfully requested. Applicants appreciate the cooperation of Examiner Prasad in discussing this application during the telephone interview with applicants' undersigned counsel on June 23, 2004. Agreement was reached during the telephone interview as to the patentability of the claims over Bailey.

Claim 1 has been amended solely for clarification. Applicants submit that claim 1 has not been narrowed in scope, as claim 1 previously defined "an insert pipe fitted on said front end portion of said ferrule main body as a result of insert molding said cylindrical main body around said insert pipe," and thereby already implicitly defined the insert pipe as being "bonded to" the front end portion of the ferrule main body. No new matter has been added. Claims 1, 3, 9 and 10 remain in the application for consideration.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action dated February 23, 2004, claims 1, 3, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Bailey et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,461,539 (hereinafter Bailey).

In the Office Action, it was urged that Bailey (Figures 1-15) shows a molded plastic ferrule for an optical fiber having a substantially cylindrical body 50 with a core receiving bore 80 in the front end, a sheath receiving bore 78 in the rear, the core receiving bore having a

diameter smaller than that of the sheath receiving bore, an integral flange portion 56, an insert pipe 42 fitted over the front portion and smaller diameter coaxial tube 90 in the front portion such that it defines a thin-walled portion between an inner surface of the small-diameter tube and core receiving bore. The "insert pipe" was stated to overlap the flange portion. It was acknowledged that Bailey failed to show insert molding, but it was asserted that insert molding was well known in the art of optical fibers.

As discussed during the noted interview, Bailey's ferrule elements are separate pieces that are simply combined with each other by using snap-fit and threaded engagements. Bailey's connector shell 42/44 is not an "insert pipe" as defined in the claims, because the ferrule main body is not and could not be insert molded around the insert pipe (and therefore the two bonded together), as claimed herein. In fact, Bailey teaches at column 6 lines 24-28 that "the knurled outer surface of central portion 32 of device 22 is held firmly while the *shell 44 is rotated about the neck-end portion 48 of ferrule 50.*" (emphasis added).

During the interview, Examiner Prasad also inquired as to the element 84 shown in Fig. 7 of Bailey. As discussed, element 84 of Bailey is simply a "fixture used for polishing end surfaces of fiber optic elements" (see, e.g., column 2 lines 43-44). Such a polishing fixture 84 could not be an "insert pipe" that is "fitted on and bonded to said front end portion of said ferrule main body as a result of insert molding said cylindrical main body around said insert pipe," as defined in claim 1.

For all of these reasons, all of the pending claims are patentable over Bailey.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 9, and 10 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For all the reasons described in the preceding paragraphs, the applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a timely action to that end is courteously solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining questions or concerns, or would prefer claim language different from that included herein, the favor of a telephone call to the applicants' attorney is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald A. Schurr', written over a horizontal line.

Donald A. Schurr
Registration No. 34,247

ATTORNEYS

Marshall & Melhorn, LLC
Four SeaGate – 8th Floor
Toledo, Ohio 43604
Phone: (419) 249-7145
Fax: (419) 249-7151